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The sound of music

Madeleine Roger graced the stage at the Highland Hills United Church in Minden on Oct. 21. Roger, who originally hails from Winnipeg, brought a level of coziness and comfort to the audience on the dreary fall evening. The show was presented by the Haliburton County Folk Society. /ADAM FRISK Special to the *Times*

Family moves forward after fire

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Editor

Deb Fisher was having a regular day on Tuesday, Oct. 17. When she left her home - the home that had once belonged to her mother - she said her pets were all curled up and sleeping for the day.

But later in the afternoon, when Fisher was out chatting with her neighbour, her worst nightmare became a reality. “She said to me, ‘Deb, your house is on fire’ and I didn’t believe her. I said, “That’s not what I need right now.”

Fisher had lived in the home with her two grandchildren, Neveah and Dominic, as well as their 10 pets, who they treated and loved as family.

Her grandchildren attend the Adult Education School in Haliburton, and both work locally with their peers and friends. They have lived with their grandmother in that same house since they were infants. “I rounded the kids up, and we got them all together, and we thought the pets had survived, thought they had escaped, but we learned they didn’t make it.”

All but one animal had perished in the fire,

see LOCAL page 2



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CENTURY 21.
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Local family seeks help

from page 1

including two dogs, five cats, and two rabbits. The Minden Fire Department tried to revive each animal, but only one dog survived. "I think we love animals more than most people do," Fisher shared with the *Times*, "and our pets can't be replaced. We had acquired each one, one by one, based on different circumstances, they came to us. They needed help, and they trusted us."

According to reports, the cause of the fire was electrical, and the wiring in the house led to an LED power pack; the type that plugs into a wall and is connected to coloured lighting. "I had no idea," said Fisher, "but it turns out they are not strong enough to trip the breaker, and it started the fire. We lost literally everything."

Fisher said that she had been using the LED lights for years. "We didn't have a lot, so I used to get the lights for the kids, to put in their rooms and decorate the place. The lights were not turned on, but the pack had overheated." The reports noted that there were no working smoke alarms in the home.

While the fire started in the afternoon, it stayed ablaze for hours as firefighters from multiple jurisdictions managed it. Upon hearing about the deaths of the pets, Fisher said that Minden Hills Fire Chief Shain Duda was the one who really stepped up. "He stayed for hours on end," she said. "That fire kept catching, but he stayed. And he helped bury all nine pets with us. The kids wanted to say goodbye to their pets, and Shain helped us do that. I can't thank him enough for the kindness that he showed us."

Fisher and her family did not have insurance to cover the damages, so they are left without clothing, household contents, and a roof over their heads. They are being housed at the Pinestone currently, but need to be out by Oct. 27, at which point they do not have any options. Though Fisher noted that staying in Haliburton County is a must. "The kids need to keep going to their school, their jobs, and be around the people who support them and love them," she said. "I don't want to leave the area." She is actively trying to find a home somewhere in Haliburton County, but has recognized the challenges of finding affordable housing; particularly on such short notice.

Beyond a home, Fisher and her grandkids are seeking clothing, food, and supplies. A Go Fund Me has been set up, and is currently sitting at over \$2000 in donations from the community, which Fisher hopes will help with rent if a home becomes available. Fisher's granddaughter, Nevaeh, works at Hook, Line and Sink in Haliburton, and they have set up a donation jar, and the Wellness Hub in Haliburton has set up a bin seeking clothing donations for the family, at their facility on Industrial Park Road.

If you can help support this family during a very difficult time, please text Deb Fisher directly at 705-306-0236. Any help would be greatly appreciated by the family.



Winners of the 2023 Haliburton Highlands Chamber Gala awards stand for a photo on Friday, Oct. 20 at the Eagle View Event Centre at Sir Sam's Ski and Ride. /EMILY STONEHOUSE Staff

Zilstra acknowledged as Highlander of the Year

by EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

Context means a lot. The place, the time, the setting that you know someone - those are all factors that contribute to the knowledge and understanding around that person.

When David Zilstra was announced as the Highlander of the Year during the annual Haliburton County Chamber of Commerce Awards Gala on Oct. 20, no one was surprised. Zilstra is seen around the community in everything from Highlands Summer Festival productions to behind the scenes at the Haliburton Highlands Hospital Foundation.

Everyone knows him, but each from a different context. "It would be fair to say that few people are as committed to the Haliburton Highlands as David Zilstra is," reads the first line from his letter of nomination. "For nearly twenty years, David has been working tirelessly behind the scenes in Haliburton County, serving on a variety of boards, committees, service clubs and more."

Zilstra moved to the community in 2005. Originally hailing from Whitby, Ontario, he jumped in with two feet the second he landed in the community. "I always grew up being involved in things," he said, referencing his childhood of joining boy scouts and volunteering at various organizations as he grew up. "I like to get involved in things, and if you really want to get involved, there are so many ways to do that."

Many would recognize Zilstra from the Rotary Club in Haliburton, where he was the president in 2014-2015. "As a Rotarian, he has been honoured with a Presidential Citation and the Fred Jones Award," reads his nomination. "Some of his Rotary highlights include chairing the famous Pumpkin Roll at the annual Colourfest event, and helping to organize initiatives such as Music in the Park."

On top of Haliburton Rotary, Zilstra is the current president of the Haliburton Business Improvement Area (BIA). This is one of those roles that's a little more behind the scenes, but to be frank, Haliburton looks as good as it does thanks to the tireless efforts of Zilstra and the local BIA team working in collaboration with Dysart et al to ensure flowers are watered, banners are hung, and decorations are placed.

To further his creative interest, Zilstra is a member of the Highlands Summer Festival Board, and works diligently to bring high-end theatrical productions for all to enjoy in the Haliburton Highlands. He has even graced the stage himself more than once to dabble in acting, singing, and dancing.

To round out his resume of involvement, Zilstra is heavily involved in the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation board, making decisions about upcoming fundraising initiatives, and dedicating time and energy to ensure the people of the community have access to the best rural healthcare measures. "His active work on the board has helped bring in thousands of fundraised dollars for capital equipment," shared his nomination.

But the way we all know David Zilstra, the context he is clearest in for so many, is as the publisher of the *Haliburton*

Echo, the *Minden Times*, *County Life*, and two other community newspapers in Bancroft. While Highlander of the Year is an award given that's not necessarily a reflection of professional endeavours, Zilstra's ties to local newspapers are instrumental in his community involvement.

"This job and the community work I do really go hand in hand," said Zilstra, noting that much of his time is dedicated to listening to people, to learning from people, and to sharing a mutual interest in the betterment of our community.

When asked about his favourite organization to be a part of, Zilstra chuckled. "Each organization is like family to me," he said, if I had to pick a favourite, it would be like picking a favorite child."

Zilstra noted that even though he is proud of the accomplishment, he feels humbled by the number of nominees, and the winners who were present at the evening. "It was a very inspirational evening," he said, "a great celebration of our community."

Overall, Zilstra has dedicated thousands of hours to making our community brighter, bolder, and more beautiful. His long-term commitment to sharing the highs and addressing the lows of rural life is seen in his work ethic, resilience, and passion for the Haliburton Highlands. "David's passion for Haliburton County is clear and constant," said his nomination form, "and is shown throughout all his diligent work and volunteer efforts. There is no one more deserving of this honour and award."

From everyone at this local newspaper, we congratulate our publisher, David Zilstra, for not only putting our paper on the map, but making our community a little bit better, each and every day. We're lucky to have him in each and every context he's involved in.

The following are additional award winners from the Chamber Gala on Oct. 20:

- Warden's Award (presented by Liz Danielsen: Places for People
- Highlander of the Year: David Zilstra
- Customer First - Business: Haliburton County Chiropractic and Rehabilitation
- Customer First - Employee: Rebecca Neave
- Young Professional of the Year: Sarah Dollo
- Tourism and Hospitality: Boshkung Brewery
- Not-for-Profit of the Year: Abbey Retreat Centre
- Business Woman of the Year: Brandi Hewson, Kohara and Co.
- Innovation and Creativity: Kennisis Lake Marina
- New Business of the Year: Sweat Social Health and Fitness
- Industry and Trade: Chaulk Woodworking
- Entrepreneur of the Year: Jenn Emmerson
- Business Achievement Award: Sylvia Holland Wind in the Willows
- Fleming Crew's Employer of the Year: Pepperlaw Creek Farms

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Rec centre rehab makes progress

by JAMES MATTHEWS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Work to remove mould from the Dorset Recreation Centre has made much progress.

Algonquin Highlands heard during its regular meeting Oct. 19 that the contractor has completely removed mould from the upper level at the centre. And the work to clean and remove mould from the facility's downstairs level continues.

The scope of work includes only a ventilation system as opposed to a full heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system (HVAC). Optimal ventilation will still prevent future mould occurrences.

The project's fixed fees include \$81,500 for administration, \$106,000 for the design, and \$950,062 for the construction. That's a total fixed cost of \$1.14-million and council previously signed off on a cash allowance of a little more than \$275,000.

Adam Thorn, public works manager, updated council on progress made thus far in the facility's rehabilitation project.

Demolition of the basement's interior has begun and work on the building's exterior has commenced with the removal of material from around the foundation, Thorn said. That's in preparation for a water membrane.

"So it's been pretty busy up there, but everything keeps going forward," he said.

Thorn said the project manager has consistently been onsite and taking photographs for the township's communications officials to

get out to the public.

"So they can see that the work has been consistently moving forward," he said.

Public Works staff have also been regularly meeting with designers to devise the best setup for the inside of the recreation centre and to settle questions about how the building's façade will look.

"I'm just kind of wondering what you're thinking is about the different layouts," Mayor Liz Danielsen said, and asked if that entailed reconfiguring room in the building.

"We're looking at the AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) requirements for the bathrooms," Thorn said. "So that's the layout I'm referring to."

"Well, it's good for everyone to see that there's lots of activity there," Danielsen said. "It's reduced the angst levels in Dorset."

Angie Bird, the municipality's CAO, said council will eventually see some ideas for the building's exterior.

"Once we've narrowed down a couple of designs, then we'll bring that forward to council for approval," Bird said.

Thorn said Bird and town staff have worked diligently to come up with ideas on how the façade will look.

"I'm really excited to show council this because it's really going to change the front of the building, should council choose, and what people will see when they roll up to it," he said.

Thorn said work seems to be on schedule and completion is anticipated to be in January.



Haunted Minden Hills

The "Go Away Acres" haunted forest walk was held Oct. 13, 14 and 15 in Minden, and had sights and frights scattered through the Minden forest to spook all visitors. /TIM YANO Special to the Times



The third annual haunted walk was not recommended for children under the age of ten, or "those who are easily scared." All proceeds from the walk were donated back to local charities.

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VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted with a hybrid model of in-person and electronic participation in accordance with the Municipality Act. Meetings begin at 9:00 AM unless otherwise noted. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

October 26- Regular Council Meeting

November 09- Regular Council Meeting

November 30- Regular Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or a live-stream link available on the Township CivicWeb Portal at mindenhills.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx or by using the direct link provided in the notice. Meeting agendas are not displayed during the meeting; please download by visiting our CivicWeb Portal at mindenhills.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx.

Please note the live stream file/video will be available to the public for the duration of one week after the Council Meeting.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

We are currently seeking energetic and highly motivated individuals for the following positions:

- Deputy Clerk
- Public Works, Roads Equipment Operator
- Student Arena Attendants
- Student Recreation Attendants

Please visit our website at www.mindenhills.ca/careers/ for a complete list of available positions and how to apply.

PUBLIC WORKS: WINTER PARKING

From Nov 1st to Apr 30th, overnight parking is prohibited between the hours of midnight and 8:00 AM on township roadways and parking lots. Furthermore, parking in the turning circle of a cul-de-sac is prohibited during all hours. Vehicles parked in these areas that prohibit the removal of snow will be towed away and/or ticketed at the owner's expense.

VENDORS WANTED

We are looking for vendors for our outdoor Artisan Market at the annual Christmas in the Village event, taking place at the Cultural Centre on Saturday, November 18 from 10 am – 4 pm. The registration fee is \$10 for a 10'x10' area. Please contact culturalcentre@minden hills.ca or call 705-286-3763 x 542 to register.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Halloween Recycling Tips

Halloween is just around the corner! No need to be haunted by Halloween waste, we are sharing some recycling tips:

- Candy and chocolate wrappers are considered garbage
- Juice boxes can be recycled with your containers recycling
- Use a reusable bag or a pillowcase to hold your candy
- Clothing and other fabrics from your costumes that cannot be reused can be recycled at the Scotch Line Landfill
- Compost your pumpkins or leave them in a wooded area as food for the wildlife

CULTURAL CENTRE

Shifting Lens, a group exhibit featuring 15 artists from the Eastern Hub of the Ontario Society of Artists, will be on display until November 25, 2023, in the Agnes Jamieson Gallery. Admission is by donation. The Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am – 4 pm. Admission is by donation. For more information, please call 705-286-3763 or email culturalcentre@minden hills.ca

Haunting in Minden Hills will take place at the Cultural Centre on Saturday, October 28 from 10 am – 4 pm. This family friendly event will feature costume contests, pumpkin carving, spooky dance workshop and dance party, colouring sheet contest, sci-fi book sale and fun Halloween games and crafts. Admission is by donation. For more information or to volunteer, please call 705-286-3763 or email culturalcentre@minden hills.ca

Join the Minden Hills Cultural Centre and Haliburton County Public Library for a special screening of the documentary *Unwanted Soldiers*, taking place at the Cultural Centre on Thursday, November 9 starting at 5 pm. Admission is free, but donations are welcome. Proceeds will go to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 636 - Minden. The film is provided courtesy of the NFB. For more information, please call 705-286-3763 or email culturalcentre@minden hills.ca

PA Day movies at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre! The Minden Hills Cultural Centre and Haliburton County Public Library welcome you to join us in a series of PA Day movies during the school calendar year of 2023 and 2024. On every PA Day starting at 1:00 PM, there will be a free, family-friendly movie screening that takes place in the Welch Room of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre. Our next movie is scheduled for Friday, November 17. No registration is required. Snacks will be provided, however, please feel free to bring your own as well. The movie of choice will be decided by voters who cast their votes at the Haliburton County Public Library, Minden Branch, or online at the following link: <https://www.haliburtonlibrary.ca/Programs-Events/PA-Day-Movies?id=1696611600-186416>. For more information, please call 705-286-3763 or email culturalcentre@minden hills.ca

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On the Spot becomes space for local artisans

by VIVIAN COLLINGS
Times Staff

Big changes are coming for On the Spot Variety this November.

Customers will soon notice a new sign above the doors and a corresponding transformation inside.

The Main Street convenience store is re-branding into Let's Get Local, an artisan shop for over 20 local creators to display their work all year long.

The Farmers' Market served as inspiration to On the Spot Variety owners Mary and Vanessa Douglas.

"We really want to be a hub for the community to come in, grab a coffee, and be able to buy some of the incredible items made by local artisans," Mary said. "It's a win for the whole community in trying times coming out

of COVID. We have a prime location downtown and receive a high traffic volume, so we thought it would be perfect to share that with others."

On Nov. 15, the downtown business will feature displays of items like home decor, jewelry, soaps, candles, pottery, preserves, honey, prepared meats, candies, pet items and more, all made by local artisans.

"It'll be more like a general store and gift shop with seating," Vanessa said. "We partnered up with We are the Nooks, and they have 30 plus locations doing the same model of helping local Canadian artisans thrive in their community."

They are currently accepting applications for more makers to join.

Each business will receive a provided shelving space with four shelves for \$175 a month.

"For the cost of a daily cup of coffee, you

could propel your artisan business to new heights," they said. "Without having to worry about upkeep, we provide the dedicated staff that will keep your space spotless and organized, creating an inviting environment while you can focus on your craft."

An open house will be held at the store, 18 Bobcaygeon Road, on Wednesday, Nov. 1 from 3 to 7 p.m. for those interested in joining to meet staff members and learn more about Let's Get Local.

To apply online for a space with Let's Get Local, artisans can reach out to Let's Get Local on Facebook, @get.local.shop on Instagram, or by visiting: letsgetlocalapplication.paperform.co.

Let's Get Local also has other exciting experiences in the works, like a Sip and Shop Christmas event.

"Stay tuned for more details. There's a lot of thought being put into expanding the cof-

“

We really want to be a hub for the community to come in, grab a coffee, and be able to buy some of the incredible items made by local artisans.

— MARY DOUGLAS

”

fee bar in the future," Mary said. "We're so excited for Haliburton County's first Let's Get Local shop."

HAUNTING IN MINDEN HILLS

An annual Halloween event held at Minden Hills Cultural Centre

Costume Contest

Spooky Dance Workshop

Halloween Games

Scary Face Painting

Pumpkin Carving Contest

Colouring Sheet Contest

Halloween Dance Floor

Sci-Fi Book Sale

*Contest prizes sponsored by local businesses, including Molly's Bistro Bakery, Minden Experience, and more.

28

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Please yield the right of way. We could be going to your house.

A Message from the Minden Hills Fire Department

Make sure to clean your chimney before you start your wood burning appliance and store hot ashes in a fire safe container.

Be prepared for winter driving conditions, monitor the weather and keep an emergency kit in your vehicle.

If you live in the Village of Minden, remember to keep the fire hydrant clean of snow, it will save a lot of time in the event of an emergency.

KEEP THEM CLEAR

If there's a fire hydrant near your house, do your part to keep it accessible this winter:

- Remove any snow and ice
- Clear a wide enough perimeter around the hydrant for firefighters to work (about 3 feet)
- Clear a path from hydrant to street

COVID-19 vaccines are a tough find in County

by JAMES MATTHEWS
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Some pharmacies are still waiting for the latest COVID-19 vaccine in Haliburton County.

That's despite the provincial government's advisory to get the needle as soon as possible and assurances that the vaccine would be available by the end of September or beginning of October for vulnerable people health-wise.

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge Health Unit issued an advisory Oct. 3 to inform residents that the XBB.1.5 COVID-19 vaccine will be available for those at high risk and those aged 65 years and over.

"The Ministry of Health released its COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance which recommends a dose of the XBB 1.5-containing COVID-19 mRNA vaccine, providing protection for the new Omicron XBB variant," the public health advisory stated. "Residents who have not been previously vaccinated can receive the XBB.1.5 COVID-19 vaccine to start the series."

The provincial Ministry of Health and Long-term Care recommends people update their fall vaccinations for COVID-19 and influenza as soon as the jabs are available.

It was anticipated that the shots would have been available at the end of September or the beginning of October for hospital patients and staff and residents of long-term care facilities.

People high at risk for flu-related health complications and first responders were also urged to get the jab at the beginning of October.

Vaccines for the general population is expected to be available by the end of October.

The Ministry of Health said in a mid-September press release that staying safe during this respiratory illness season by way of the necessary vaccines will prevent visits to

hospitals.

"Our government is making sure Ontarians can connect to tools they need to keep themselves and their loved ones safe and healthy throughout fall respiratory season," said Health Minister Sylvia Jones.

"We are working with our partners across the health care system to continue to support hospitals and their staff while making it easier for people to access the care they need, in their community."

But the thing is, there seems to be a COVID-19 vaccine to be found at many pharmacies in Haliburton County.

Ashley Beaulac, the manager of communications for Dr. Natalie Bocking, the region's medical officer of health, said the public health unit is still awaiting word about vaccines.

"We haven't received any word yet from the province in respect to the COVID-19 vaccine for the general public," Beaulac said, and added that there's been no information about the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine either.

Bocking told the unit's board members Oct. 19 that influenza season has started in the region with the confirmation of a pair of cases within the health unit's territory. Based on reported symptoms, there's a moderate increase in cases so far this year compared to last year.

But the increase is at levels that are somewhat expected, Bocking said.

"This doesn't mean we won't start to see a further increase," she said. "I think we're still only at the beginning."

Shots for influenza are available at some pharmacies in the county. And the COVID-19 vaccine just arrived at the Haliburton Highland Pharmacy. So recently, in fact, that the pharmacist there said Oct. 20 that they're yet to be unpacked for distribution.

COVID-19 shots are available at the Shoppers Drug Mart in Haliburton, but staff at the Rexall say it's a needle they're still waiting to receive.

At the Minden Pharmasave, the flu shot is just starting

“

We are working with our partners across the health care system to continue to support hospitals and their staff while making it easier for people to access the care they need, in their community.

— HEALTH MINISTER SYLVIA JONES

”

to roll in but there are no shots for COVID-19. And the pharmacy at Highlands Remedy's in Minden shares that circumstance.

"Stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations, get an annual flu shot when it becomes available, stay home when you feel sick, wash your hands often and cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze," said Dr. Kieran Moore, the province's chief medical officer of health.

"COVID-19 activity is rising with new variants circulating and other seasonal respiratory illnesses are expected early this year. These small decisions are proven to have a big impact on keeping everyone in our communities safe and healthy."

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Hanging by a thread

AS WE WATCH the world shift, change, shrink, and grow around us, the fragility of the movements becomes apparent.

Something I am starting to witness more and more as I write for a rural newspaper is how the balance of our community is hanging by a thread.

We live here for the lakes, the trees, the community events, the access to schools, the availability of jobs. But all of these things are tethered to uncertain circumstances that can crash and burn at any moment.

On many of the volunteer organizations I am either affiliated with or write stories about, the demographic of the group comfortably qualifies for seniors discounts.

As I interviewed the local bus drivers, I learned that there are exactly as many drivers as there are buses needed right now.

When watching council meetings or AGM's, those seated are tightly at their quorum for the voting bylaws to be met.

There is no room for someone to be sick, for human error, for the opportunity to take a day off.

And this is taxing on people. It is draining to know that the weight of the community sits on your shoulders. If you wake up with a fever one day, the building blocks of responsibilities so precariously stacked, would simply tumble.

When we were in the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, I thought perhaps things had changed. The understanding that at a moment's notice, the world can tilt.

We learned that people can work from home, that parents can take time off, that children maybe don't need the rush and hum of filling every waking moment, for fear of being bored.

During that tumultuous time, while it was chaotic and scary and weird for so many, it was also an opportunity to give our responsibilities a moment to catch up. The priorities in life changed, and it felt like a major socio-economic shift had taken place.

I was surprised to see how quickly we bounced back to the way things were before. As soon as we were given the green light, folks added responsibilities to their plates; stacking them higher and higher to make up for lost time.

And now we're back in this place where we were before; the fragile balance of keeping our community afloat, falling on the shoulders of the few who really care.

**EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Editor

We see this repeatedly in our community; the same people being involved in the same things. And as I watched the nominees roll out for the Haliburton County Chamber of Commerce Awards Gala, there were many familiar faces. Folks that have been nominated year over year, because they're the same ones who care, who get involved, who step up. Every year.

But when it's the same people who are piling their plates with responsibilities, it leaves the community in a fragile state. There's no room for someone to be sick, for human error, for the opportunity to take a day off.

This community is thriving based on the interests and investments from a small handful of committed and dedicated people, but we need more to step up. To change the demographic of our organizations, our committees, our events, and to bolster the community into a place of stability and strength.

Because when any little thread is put under too much pressure, it's bound to break.

Kwarky



Decoys then and now

THE OTHER day I was looking online at the latest crop of duck and goose decoys. And, as I calculated the interest I would need to pay on the loan required to buy a dozen of them, I thought, "Boy, duck decoys sure have come a long way."

You see when I started hunting, some 47 years ago, we carved our own decoys out of cedar blocks. Aside from our time and labour and a bit of paint and a few stitches, they were free.

Shortly thereafter, however, we began to see the wisdom in buying dozens of the relatively new and inexpensive, plastic decoys instead. To be fair, wisdom might not have been the term that the giggling, non-duck hunters who stood behind us in the store lineup used. After all, ingenious marketing had convinced grown men to happily buy dozens of plastic ducks, and often for as much as \$3.99 a bird.

If we had only known how bad it would get.

The new duck decoys are so good that they cause the guileless creatures they are meant to seduce to circle around them a few times, get suckered into the spread, and pay the ultimate price. Which these days is around \$200 a dozen.

But enough about the hunters. Those decoys fool ducks too.

And though they probably don't help you shoot any more birds than the old decoys, they are easily lifelike enough to get shot by the guy in the blind who never bought a single one (until that moment.)

Despite this, decoy makers are continually improving the realism of their new offerings. Hunters can now buy decoys whose wings spin or whose realistic legs move in

the water to create the illusion of life.

You'd think this would be all that is required. But you would be wrong.

Duck decoys and accessories are so lucrative now that I believe I have a few ideas that could be commercially viable.

One of my best ideas (patent pending) is a floating decoy that holds a park bench on artificial grass. On it would be a mannequin dressed up as an old man. I think we all know nothing attracts ducks and geese more.

This would be the base model, which would retail for about \$7400.99. The deluxe model would move the mannequin's to make it look like he was throwing out generous portions of bread. This would sell for \$9734.99.

I understand that this is a lot of money to put out just to shoot a duck or goose, but think of the money you'd save in actual duck and goose decoys. Also, if you spend that kind of money, you are probably going to go out an awful lot, if only to disprove your partner's com-

plaint about it being something that you are going to use once a year.

For those who want an entry level product, my company will just sell a do-it-yourself kit comprised of a park bench and an old man disguise, complete with newspaper. That's going to retail for \$1299.99.

Right now, these ideas (patent pending) are in the research and development phase in several municipal parks across North America and the initial results are promising.

These are just a few of the exciting products we're developing.

We're also working on a pigeon blind that looks just like a statue.

**STEVE GALEA**
Beyond 35

IN OTHER WORDS

Columns and Letters to the Editor

Litter boxes and lies

I'VE NEVER been a fan of cats. I find them self-obsessed and neurotic.

If I was a cat fan, however, I certainly would not be dressing up as one. Some people are, putting on cat masks and tails, meowing and purring and rubbing up friends while referring to themselves by the pronoun "it".

It's a fad that has been around for a while. Some people say it is harmless: if some people think they are cats, that's their business.

Folks who do this often are referred to as furies, a subculture that dresses as cartoonish animals as a sexual fetish, or simply for fun.

Harmless enough, I guess, except it has created a blizzard of damaging flimflam designed to confuse and deceive, and it continues to grow.



JIM POLING SR.

From Shaman's Rock

Two years ago in Prince Edward Island a rumour spread that litter boxes were being placed in schools to accommodate students who identify as cats. It spread to other provinces, while appearing in school districts in several U.S. states.

Far-right politicians and media personalities promoted it as a real life issue and made it a topic in election campaigns. Last year in the U.S. at least 20 conservative political figures claimed that schools are putting litter boxes in schools for students who want to identify as cats.

Scott Jensen, a Republican who campaigned unsuccessfully to become Minnesota governor last fall, raised it in his campaign, saying:

"Why are we telling elementary kids that they get to choose their gender this week? Why do we have litter boxes in some of the school districts so kids can pee in them, because they identify as a furry? We've lost our minds."

Marjorie Taylor Greene, the controversial Georgia Republican, told reporters outside a Donald Trump-campaign event that schools are putting out litter boxes for students. J.D. Vance, another Trump-backed Republican, also has said schools are doing this.

No evidence has been found anywhere that any school administration has put litter boxes in schools for students identifying as cats.

Cat litter is purchased by some schools but not for use as student toilets. Some schools use it to prevent slipping on icy walkways. Others, in the U.S., store cat litter and pails to use as toilets in the event of an active-shooter lockdown.

The flimflam hoax is believed to be backlash to gender non-conformity in schools. Some politicians and activists say protections for gay and transgender students have gone too far.

Untrue as it is, the litter box flimflam is causing considerable alarm among parents and much grief for schools administrations in Canada and the U.S.

"This claim as well as many others are simply false and are causing unnecessary stress to students and staff," Norbert Carpenter, PEI director of schools, said in a statement denying the litter box rumours.

Last spring a Quebec school district was forced to publicly deny it has placed litter boxes on school properties and that its students are being led about on leashes. It made the statement after being flooded by questions and complaints from alarmed parents.

The statement warned that anyone spreading the rumour could be subject to legal action.

School boards in Renfrew and Durham regions also have had to issue similar public denials.

Spreading the litter box hoax is the work of unintelligent people. It is putting stress on and wasting time of teachers and school administrators who are being distracted by nonsense that is making their jobs more difficult.

It is shameful and says much about what our society has become - a society in which anyone can say anything about anyone (most often on social media) without challenge or retribution.

A lesson from the litter box scam is that we need to challenge everything that we hear these days. I'm getting to the point that if someone tells me it is raining outside, I'll go to a window to see for myself. To be totally sure I'll stick my arm out the window to see if it gets wet.

It's a shame but truth and trust are giving way to tribalism. Truth today often is whatever a particular group promotes as truth as a means of reshaping the world into what they want it to be.

Giving workers a piece of the action

DO CANADIAN workers have the right to get a share of the profits they help generate?

I would argue that they do, and what's more, I believe that profit sharing should be one of the cornerstone principles in a new Canadian Economic Charter of Rights and Responsibilities.

Profit sharing is one of seven key economic charter principles I highlighted in last week's column. It would require all large companies in Canada with more than 300 employees to share annual profits with their workers.

At Magna International Inc., the Canadian auto parts company I founded, profit sharing was a core principle in the economic charter of rights that we enshrined in our governing Corporate Constitution. The economic rights contained in the Corporate Constitution made every employee a partner in profitability.

Because our employees knew they would get a portion of the profits we generated, they put their heart and soul into making quality products at a competitive price. With profit sharing in place, revenue and profits skyrocketed in the years that followed and placed Magna on the path of phenomenal growth and expansion.

Harvard Business School labelled our profit sharing philosophy, "Magna's success formula". And that formula was based on the belief that all of the company's key stakeholders should share in the success of the business - or what we described as "getting a piece of the action."

When Magna celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2007, the company had shared more than \$1 billion in profits with employees - and it has shared hundreds of millions more since then.

I believe we should implement the same profit-sharing principle on a national scale through a Canadian Economic Charter of

Rights & Responsibilities.

A company can't make a profit without the hard work, creativity and resourcefulness of its employees. And when companies are making record profits, they should have to share some of those profits with their employees.

Sharing profits with workers would not only benefit employees, but it would also benefit companies and governments.

Companies would see an increase in productivity and generate higher profits. Employees would get to pocket more money. And governments would bring in more tax revenue.

We would end up creating a system where wealth is distributed more evenly and fairly throughout the economy, rather than remaining concentrated in the hands of a relatively few wealthy

individuals. One thing is for certain: if we fail to find a way to allow workers to participate in sharing some of the profits they produce, our living standards will continue to erode.

Creating an economic right of sharing profits with workers would basically be a recognition that our economy is driven by three forces: smart managers, hard-working employees, and investors.

All three have the right to share in the profits of the business.

With profit sharing as a core right in a new economic charter, more Canadian workers would begin to reap the benefits of having a financial stake in their place of employment, and Canadian businesses would become much more productive and competitive.

That's a win-win scenario that's difficult to ignore.

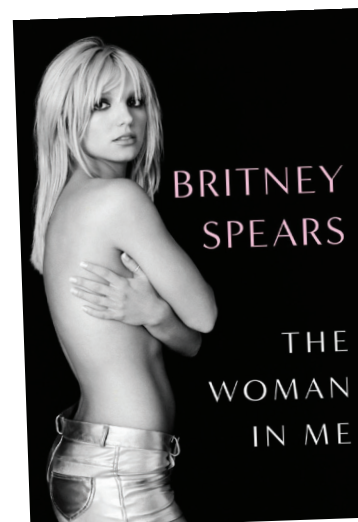
If you would like to learn more about how a Canadian Economic Charter of Rights can improve Canadian living standards, please email info@economiccharter.ca.



FRANK STRONACH

Principles

HCPL's Book of the Week



In June 2021, the whole world was listening as Britney Spears spoke in open court. The impact of sharing her voice—her truth—was undeniable, and it changed the course of her life and the lives of countless others. *The Woman in Me* reveals for the first time her incredible journey—and the strength at the core of one of the greatest performers in pop music history.

Written with remarkable candor and humor, Spears's groundbreaking book illuminates the enduring power of music and love—and the importance of a woman telling her own story, on her own terms, at last.

The Woman in Me by Britney Spears is available to borrow from the Haliburton County Public Library.

Magic school buses; a peek into Haliburton Bus Lines

by EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

What's big and yellow and connects our entire community, yet still flies under the radar on a regular basis?

If you guessed school buses, you're right.

This past week was bus driver appreciation week across the country, and with 56 vehicles in the local fleet, reaching every corner of Haliburton County, what better time to connect with our local bus drivers.

"We're mediators, referees, baby-sitters, disciplinarians, counsellors, cheerleaders, and safe spaces," said Nina Clemmens, the head trainer for the bus lines, as we sat down to chat one chilly Thursday afternoon, "and we manage to do all that from our peripherals."

The bus lines have a cozy office set up on Wallings Road, with bowls of jelly beans on the desks and freshly strewn Halloween decor. The team swapped a series of inside jokes, references, and stories as I was welcomed into the middle of their circle to listen and learn.

Each of the staff - from dispatch to recruitment to marketing to training - also double their responsibilities by driving buses; sometimes regularly, and sometimes as a fill-in.

But the common denominator to each staff working there, is that they are parents. "I got into this because I wanted to spend more time with my kids, wanted to know what they were doing," said branch manager Alicia Scheffee. "You actually came on a good day!" she laughed. "Normally, there's at least one kid in this office with us."

The kids are the heart and soul of what they do at the bus company, and through all the challenges they stumble upon, knowing



The faces behind the Haliburton Bus Lines. The buses travel to all corners of the county to support local kids getting to schools year-round.

/EMILY STONEHOUSE Staff

that the local kids are safe, supported, seen, and heard is consistently their number one priority.

And there's no shortage of local kids. Currently, there are approximately 1800 who take the bus consistently to schools, with many more jumping on occasionally. "Basically our entire school system is bused in," said Jessica Podmore, who works dispatch, noting that rural communities have opportunities and challenges that differ from those in urban settings. "This is very unique to our region," she said.

The majority of urban schools split up their routes based on age, grade, and school. This is an option based on the wide pool of drivers available in the city. In Haliburton County, the pool is a little shallower when it comes

to drivers. While the company is thrilled to have consistent drivers for each route currently, they noted that there are no back-up options.

This is why they're actively trying to recruit to build their roster of local drivers. "Our demographic in drivers is shifting," said Podmore, "but of course, everyone is very well trained."

Nina Clemmens takes the lead on all bus driver training in the county. She outlined the rigorous yet attainable process of becoming a driver for the bus lines. "It takes about two weeks in total," she said, "but we redo the training every five years. Then, past the age of 65 it's every three years, then every year for drivers over the age of 80."

The training includes a series of in-depth background checks, 12 lessons, both in-class and on the road, a road test, and a specific student bus driving course. The graduate would receive an active "B" licence, and the ability to drive a bus safely on public roads.

While the company is always actively looking for drivers, they noted that their largest demographic of drivers is currently folks who are middle-aged. When asked why, they all had the same answer: childcare.

"There's no childcare available in the county," said Clemmens, "so driving a school bus allows you to have the same schedule as your kids. Drive them into school, then pick them up at the end of the day, and get paid for it." She noted that many parents drive the bus in the morning and afternoon to complement their kids' schedule, and often pick up a part-time job throughout the day, between bus routes.

"We're trying to change the narrative around bus drivers," said Scheffee, "it's always the negative about drivers and what we do, or what goes wrong, but we want to change that stereotype."

Scheffee and her team are actively brainstorming ideas for how to get involved in the community, and not only recruit more drivers to their fleet, but showcase everything they are proud of in their jobs.

One of the ways they get out there is by offering the "Paint the Bus" activity at public schools, where kids are eager to mix paints and meet the drivers. Because, Scheffee noted, bus drivers are important people in these kids' lives.

"For so many kids, the bus is their safe space. They talk to us, they meet other people," said Scheffee. Podmore echoed her sentiment, making specific reference to the opportunity for kids of all ages to take the same bus. "When my daughter was in Stuart Baker, she got to know people in JDH, and now that she's in JDH and preparing for high

school, she already knows people there too," she said. "They automatically create this big brother, big sister dynamic on the buses."

The staff behind the scenes at the Haliburton Bus Company dabble in the world of driving buses as well, and they lit up when we talked about what that means to each of them. "It's great when the kids recognize us in the stores, after school," shared Steve Potalivo, who works in training and maintenance, and as an occasional driver when needed, "they get so excited to see us."

It's blazingly apparent that the reason each and every staff member at the Haliburton Bus Lines is in this career: it's truly for the kids.

And even though it's for the kids, the school year is actually their quiet time. In the summer, they drive all the routes to accommodate camps, weddings, and special events, making their schedules even more unpredictable, but still tying the community together.

They also provide a bus for seniors in Dysart to travel out of the county for appointments, receive medication, or go to the doctor. On Wednesdays, they offer access to the bus for all interested seniors to do their shopping. For access to this resource, contact 705-457-1740.

In an effort to become more involved in the community, the bus lines are actively finding ways of giving back. Their next event is Halloween at Lakeside Church, where they are filling their bus with donated canned goods that will go to the Food Bank after the event, and on Nov. 18 at Minden Canadian Tire, they will be hosting their Toy Stuff a Bus fundraiser to collect toys, clothing, and food for the Food Bank. "We're always wondering how we can become more involved in the community," said Scheffee. "So we want to hear from people, we want to hear your ideas, and we want to give back as much as we can."

As I wound down the interview and laughed with the crew while we snapped photos outside, I realized that this group of people are the heart and soul of the community. They are the reason our kids get to learn every day, the security of knowing our most precious cargo is safe, and the pulse that keeps the momentum of our little village going, in all corners of the county.

If you are interested in getting involved with the Haliburton Bus Lines team, contact 705-457-8882 or email info@haliburton-buslines.com.

And the next time you see a big yellow school bus on one of the many winding roads in Haliburton County, be sure to give them a nod of appreciation. We couldn't do this without them.

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From left to right

I HAVE LONG thought that economics is a pseudo-science, the necromancy of divining the entrails of a chicken wearing the three-piece suit of credentialism. The notion arose when the quivering of The Market was featured in the daily news, with The Market personified as a slightly hysterical bimbo who reacted to events: scared by this, encouraged by that, mystified by the other. Now that the internet tells everyone everything about anything that happens anywhere, the media has stopped specifying the culprit of the day, substituting generalized big-sweep explanations in which anyone can find a grain of truth.

Most of what twitches The Market are not acts of god or nature, but rather the thrashings of man-made monsters. Like OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, formed in 1960 by primarily Middle East countries to control the production and therefore price of oil worldwide. It flexed its muscles in 1973 to force the return of lands occupied by Israel, cutting back production by five per cent which almost overnight raised the price of oil by 70 per cent and set off a panic that the world was running out of oil. Canada hustled to protect itself by prioritizing development of its own resources, giving the nod to explore the Tar Sands, as they were known then, to meet our future need. That the golden egg lay in the nest of the West emboldened them to seek the federal influence they long felt was unjustly denied them. (And still do – to wit the current battle between Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, cheered on by Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe, and the federal government about control over energy development.)

Papa Trudeau's response in the fall of 1980 was the NEP, the National Energy Program, which sought national ownership, self-sufficiency, and internal equity over all things oil. The federal government created Petro Canada to ensure national ownership, taxed oil production to create national revenue, and froze the in-country price of oil at lower than the international price to ensure internal equity. I lived in Alberta at that time: the signs everywhere were 'Let the Eastern Bastards Freeze in the Dark'. When the NEP came into law, spring 1982 as I clearly recall, the imminent sale of our home stopped in its tracks as the oil industry left town overnight, and abandoned workers abandoned their homes for greener pastures. Houses could be bought for \$1, occupied for free until the bank came to foreclose, and then gutted for anything with resale value. We gave thanks daily that our house secured

a renter for the following four years, until it eventually sold – at a fire-sale price.

Why am I talking about this? Because Inflation is the man-made monster that is rocking our boats at present. Jim Stanford, CEO of the Centre for Future Work (and rogue economist, in the opinion of some), has been saying from the giddyup that raising interest rates to quell inflation, as per classic economic theory, will not work. (He does not say, as I do, that economics is smoke and mirrors.) The intent of a borrowing rate hike is to discourage people from spending. And as Stanford predicted, it hasn't, because the market elements that have remained inflationary are the things we cannot do without: shelter, food and transportation. With cost structures far beyond individual influence. We feel, and are, largely powerless.

The concern about instituting structural inflation in the form of higher wages is laughable: the Wizard behind the curtain, the capitalist necessity to grow and keep on growing no matter what, has in its hands all the levers of the economy, an international web of structure that far out-powers organized labour. And the government plays whack-a-mole with its flyswatter.

And why is it that the government has naught but a flyswatter? Its role in traditional economic theory is to support essential resources when the economy is in its cyclical downturns, and refill the coffers when the economy is humming. That formula got smashed with Maggie Thatcher and Reagan and neoliberalism, which decreed that government should butt out. Or if it wants to play, be businesslike. Citizens became customers who must pay for what they use so taxes to fund the common good are minimized. Government must invest in business which will then do all that is necessary. Remember the trickle-down theory?

We are playing a life-and-death game using a rule-book based on a bogus science that has led us inexorably and more or less blindly to a sad state of affairs. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer and together we desecrate the earth. Apologies for being a Debbie Downer; for next time I have some thoughts about what we mere mortals might do to reclaim humanity.

I'm reluctant to blame this column on the book that shook these thoughts loose, but I want to honour it for messing with my mind; it's *From Left to Right: Saskatchewan's Political and Economic Transformation*, by Dale Eisler, University of Regina Press, 2022.



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18

10:30AM - 4:30PM

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The Times

MINDEN ONTARIO

Tourism group plans survey of industry stakeholders

by JAMES MATTHEWS
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Ontario Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO) put the cap on another successful season.

OHTO, which began in 2010, is one of 13 regional tourism organizations created by the provincial government as a means to more effectively coordinate tourism development efforts and increase visitation to Ontario.

It's mandate is to build and support a competitive tourism region through marketing and product development.

Meghan James, the OHTO's chief governing officer, said during the group's Oct. 17 annual general meeting that the region's tourism operators have bounced back from restrictions imposed with the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It has been so great to watch as our region has grown, adapted, and moved forward to continue offering many great experiences for our visitors," she said. "We have adapted and continue to find ways to showcase what we have to offer."

She said she's encouraged by the engagement of those in the tourism industry and it's a reflection of why most participants are in the business.

"It's a people business and without our relationships and the sharing of ideas, we simply couldn't be a tourism destination," she said. "We come together in challenging times and we celebrate success together."

The return of in-person connections after pandemic lockdowns has enabled the OHTO to continue to work toward a more responsible approach and to strengthen communities through responsible tourism.

And many of region's businesses have jumped on board with the OHTO's initiatives.

Much of the success would not be possible without the support of the province through its regional tourism organization program and, more recently, the federal government by way of FedDev Ontario within the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

"We are pleased they recognize our role as an organization to deliver support to the tourism sector in a special part of rural eastern Ontario," James said.

The rural voice can sometimes be overlooked, she said. But OHTO has worked hard to develop relationships with funders and have encouraged individual tourism operators to impress upon the various levels of government the importance of supporting the sector.

While there's encouragement in what's being seen, she said OHTO recognizes the industry's dynamic nature. That show the importance of input from tourism operators.

James said the organization will launch a tourism community survey in which all tourism stakeholders are asked to participate. OHTO is committed to "responding to the needs of our industry, but we can only do that if we hear from you," she said.



Minden Food Centre completes new look

Friends of the Minden Community Food Centre wanted to make 24 Newcastle Street, the home of the Minden Food Bank, warmer and more welcoming for our clients, employees, volunteers and the general public at no cost to the Food Bank. The MCFC receives no government funding and relies entirely on the generosity of individuals, businesses and foundations to provide our programs and services.

A team, led by Jim Ecclestone (five generation family on Gull Lake) wanted to 'give back to the community' by donating their time and efforts to beautify the Minden Food Bank.

Local contributors include: Shane Gallagher – OSC Contracting; Steve Teal – Minden Home Hardware & Building Centre; Terry Prentice – Tom Prentice and Sons; Manfred Fleiner – Stone Mason; Larry Case – Gull River Plumbing; Tim Jackson – TJ Electric; Chris Cassella – Triple C Heating and Cooling.

The Minden Community Food Centre truly appreciates the work these local people have done to make the Minden Food Bank warmer and more inviting.

To donate to the Minden Food Bank, we now accept e-transfer donations at mcfc.donations@gmail.com

Submitted

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Tickets Available for the 2024 Cash Calendar
When: Now until sold out
Where: Multiple Locations- See Description
The Haliburton and District Lions Club is now selling tickets for their 2024 Super Cash Calendar. Three draws happen the second Monday of every month from January 8th to October 14th 2024. Please visit www.haliburtonlions.com for a list of ticket locations and for more information.

Contract Bridge
When: Every Tuesday, 9 a.m. to noon
Where: Minden United Church basement, 21 Newcastle Street
Our weekly contract bridge has resumed and it's hoped that many of those who played before Covid will come back, along with new members. All levels of skill welcomed.

Annual Ducks Unlimited Dinner & Auction
When: Oct. 27, 5:30 p.m.
Where: Pinestone Resort, 4252 County Rd 21
Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for cocktails, merchandise viewing and raffle ticket sales. Dinner will be at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$60 per person. Call Shannon Stinson: 705-455-2429 for tickets

Outdoor Christmas Pots
When: Tuesday, Nov. 7, 7 p.m.
Where: Minden Community Center, 55 Parkside St.Minden

Minden & District Horticultural Society invites you to come listen and watch our guest speaker Lorraine Turcotte demonstrate making Outdoor Christmas Pots.

Christmas Craft Sale
When: Saturday, Nov. 11, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Where: Lloyd Watson Centre Wilberforce
Join us for a Christmas Craft sale to browse the flea market, baked goods, crafts, and unique Christmas gifts. Free admission, and snack bar on site. Vendors are welcome. Please vcontact Kathy at 705-448-1285 or at skrogers1995@gmail.com.

Minden Legion Branch 636

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Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
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Friday Fish & Chips & Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
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Public health unit takes steps against opioid crisis

by JAMES MATTHEWS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge Public Health District is about in the middle of all other districts when it comes to the number of opioid overdose related hospital visits.

Dr. Natalie Bocking, the unit's medical officer of health, said during the public health board's Oct. 19 meeting that there were 13 opioid toxicity deaths from January to May in the HKPR district. In 2022, the total number of overdose deaths across the region was 35 for the entire year.

"We're somewhat at the same level as what happened through the year (last year) from January to May," Bocking said.

The drug poisoning trend that's been seen in a number of jurisdictions has been increases in 2020 and 2021 because of the pandemic before slightly declining to the current plateau.

"And certainly not going back down to levels we saw prior to 2016," Bocking said.

She said the HKPR public health unit has a mandate to respond to the ongoing drug poisoning crisis. It has protocols related to substance use prevention and harm reduction. Current primary activities are related to surveillance and data collection from paramedics and emergency rooms.

"We know that, if it reaches a certain point, we will issue alerts to the community that we're seeing a higher number than what we have seen of presentations to the emergency departments or calls for overdoses," Bocking said.

A new community response plan is being coordinated with partner organizations to enable a quick response to a high level of opioid overdoses.

The local drug strategy centres on a coalition of institutions and community organizations with the overlapping mandate to address the harmful use of substances in the community. Those groups include the health unit, paramedics, police, hospitals, and vari-

ous Haliburton County services.

Community groups include the John Howard Society, Greenwood Coalition, and PARN.

"By coordinating our efforts we're likely to make a larger difference than each working parallel," Bocking said.

Respiratory illness season begins

Bocking said influenza season has started in the region with the confirmation of a pair of cases within the health unit's territory. Based on reported symptoms, there's a moderate increase in cases so far this year compared to last year.

But the increase is at levels that are somewhat expected, Bocking said.

"This doesn't mean we won't start to see a further increase," she said. "I think we're still only at the beginning."

Respiratory illness season last year peaked earlier than pre-pandemic levels. That was at the end of November.

"So we'll continue to see an increase going into November, but hopefully not at what we experienced last fall," she said.

Bocking said it's important for people to stay up-to-date on their vaccinations, which will entail jabs for influenza and COVID-19. For people older than 60 years old and living in a long-term care facility, there's a new vaccine against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

What used to be just the single flu shot in the fall of the year has become three needles, she said.

"We have seen an increase in COVID-19 activity, and this is primarily marked by an increase in the number of outbreaks that had been identified at long-term care homes and in hospital settings."

Thankfully, she said, the increase hasn't been overly dramatic like the activity in previous surges of the virus.

Currently, people of higher risk for severe illness are getting the latest COVID vaccine. The general public will be eligible at the end of October, she said.



Timber!

A large tree was removed along the shore of the Gull River in downtown Minden on Oct. 18. Minden Hills staff alerted locals that Water Street was closed for the duration of the operation, which was completed in a matter of hours. /Photo submitted by Guenter Horst

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Minden teen crowned champ

by EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

For Isla Dobbins, there is no such thing as ‘too fast.’

The 14-year-old Minden resident was just crowned a champion at the Ram Rodeo Tour this past weekend as a youth barrel racer, and won all three of her performances, including a run around the stadium on her horse, Blondy, in 15.24 seconds.

“But every arena is different,” shared the teen, humbly noting that her timed results have been different at each race.

Isla was recognized as both the champion for the weekend overall, as well as a year-end champion, staying on top of the roster for the majority of the season. “It still doesn’t feel real,” she said, when asked about the significance of the win.

With this being her first ever finals, Isla said that she felt nervous to be at the event, but in terms of the experience itself, she didn’t bat an eye. “I got into it because I wanted to go fast,” she said, noting that the sport is fuelled by adrenaline.

Isla got into western riding about three years ago, after making the switch from riding ponies; a hobby which she started at the age of seven. When asked about the logistics of western riding, Isla shared that “it’s just like what you see with cowboys and cow-girls,” referencing the attire, the equipment,



Minden teen Isla Dobbins was named champion at the Ram Rodeo Tour; a dream she never thought would be possible. But Isla believes this is now just the beginning. /Photo submitted

and the challenges. It also incorporates a tremendous amount of speed, as noted in the race around the arena in under 20 seconds. “One of the reasons I switched to western

was the adrenaline rush you get during the race. I love going as fast as I can.”

At competitions for western riding, judges evaluate gaits, manners, disposition, lead changes, and responsiveness to the rider. It is apparent in the footage captured of the event that Isla feels tethered to her horses, and that connection is what makes the sport enjoyable - for both her and the horse.

For Isla, that’s the number one reason she loves riding. “That connection with the

horse,” she said, referencing Blondy, “it’s just so amazing how much trust we have in each other. I trust her with my life.”

She shared that last year was tough on her with different races and new challenges, but she is hopeful for the future. “If you had told me last year that I came first I wouldn’t have believed you,” she shared. “It still doesn’t feel real honestly, I can’t believe we have made it this far.”

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9		8	4	7				
			5		7			
	2	9	3					
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							9	5
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8	3	6		5				

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Answers on page 15

Murdoch in Minden

Maureen Jennings, author of the *Murdoch Mysteries* books that became the hit TV series, hold up a photo of her original inspiration for William Murdoch while she presented at the 15th annual Friends of the Haliburton County Public Library Gala and Silent Auction on Sunday, Oct. 22 at the Minden branch. Jennings shared examples of inspiration for some of her stories and answered audience questions during the presentation. Proceeds raised at the event support HCPL initiatives. /VIVIAN COLLINGS Staff

The Minden Library was full for their 15th annual Friends of the Haliburton County Public Library Gala on Sunday.



Happenings at the high school

The HHSS girls basketball team shoots some hoops during practice. /TIM YANO Special to the Times



Coaches demonstrate drills at a girls field hockey practice at Haliburton Highlands Secondary School.

Haliburton Highlands Secondary School Interact Club students will once again be collected non-perishable food items for the Haliburton County Food Bank this Halloween for their We Scare Hunger campaign. The club will have a box located in the school for drop off donations, they will be collecting items at the Trunk or Treat event at Head Lake Park on the evening of Monday Oct. 31, and will be going door to door in some neighbourhoods on Halloween night. /FILE



The Haliburton Highlands boys volleyball team plays a game during their practice in the school gym last week.

Flood takes on the Huskies ice as assistant coach

by **VIVIAN COLLINGS**
Times Staff

When the Haliburton County Huskies head coach Ryan Ramsay asked to have lunch with Owen Flood a few months ago, the equipment manager and trainer at the time was expecting a sandwich and some conversation about the upcoming season.

To the Haliburton County local’s surprise, he was instead offered the position of assistant coach for the local Ontario Junior Hockey League team.

The long time player is modest about his accomplishments, but it’s clear his outstanding work ethic and dedication to the sport are what got him there.

“I’d been doing all their strength conditioning stuff, I was also helping around the rink in the first year, and last year I had a similar role. I did some equipment stuff and was out on the ice with them running more of the skill development practices,” Flood said. “I was surprised when Ryan offered the assistant coach position to me - I definitely didn’t see it coming. It was very exciting.”

Being a pragmatic person, Flood knew he still wanted to take some time to really make sure the job would be a good fit.

“I talked to some other people in hockey that I really respect to make sure the job was suited towards me, because strength conditioning is a lot different from the other side of things,” he said. “I’ve been around hockey for quite a while and Ryan thought I was capable of doing the job and so did the others, so that’s when I decided it was up my alley to take it.”

The local fitness trainer got his start with the Huskies before the team even came to town three years ago.

“The team came from Whitby, they were formally the Whitby Fury, so I had two clients that I trained in the summers that played for Whitby, and they told me about the Huskies,” he said.

From there, he reached out to Ramsay to ask if the team needed a trainer and equipment manager, and was offered the job.

He still does the Huskies’ fitness training, but work with the team look a little different for Flood now.

“My game days are a lot different in terms of going through lineups and helping with all the systems that we run,” he said.

He and the team’s other assistant coach, Matt Comand, also run the team’s practices.



Haliburton local Owen Flood has become assistant coach for the Haliburton County Huskies this year. /TIM YANO Special to the *Times*

“We come up with drills, teaching the kids where they’re supposed to be on the ice, and then I also make sure they’re working hard at off-ice training,” Flood said.

He stays busy the rest of the time with his new gym, Spot 97 in Minden.

“I do personal training there as well, so in the winter I spend more time doing the personal training when I’m not with the hockey team at the rink,” he said.

To most, assistant coach for an OJHL team and running a new business might seem like an overwhelming feat.

To Flood, it’s just about finding balance.

“Right now, I have a really good balance between the gym and the team. On the bus travelling to away games, I get some computer stuff done, so I just learn when I have time for certain things as I go,” he said.

A love for the sport

Since starting out in the CanSkate program in Minden at a

young age, Flood knew he wanted to play the game.

“I then moved on to play for Highland Storm, played a little AAA in Orillia, and then when I went to post-secondary school I played a bit of junior hockey, and then came back home,” he said.

The reason why he loves the cool air of the arena and the sound of sticks and blades on ice has evolved over the years for Flood.

“Hockey before was all about being with friends, and now hockey for me is about helping kids achieve their goals which is really rewarding. In the summer I get to help them in the gym get bigger and stronger and hopefully make the hockey team they want to make and be better on the ice, and then with the team I get to make sure everyone’s working within a system and seeing them be successful is super rewarding,” he said. “That’s what I enjoy most and what makes it fun for me.”

Huskies stun the Golden Hawks again

by **ALEX GALLACHER**
Special to the Times

The Haliburton County Huskies completed their weekend of OJHL competition with something notably absent: a home game. After their last stunning victory at home against the Trenton Golden Hawks, the Huskies took to the road to face off against the Aurora Tigers and the Hawks themselves.

Trouble with Tigers

The Huskies ventured out to Aurora to face off against the Tigers, a team that has given them much trouble this season. The last game against this team ended in a 3-3 draw after the Tigers stormed back to tie the game in the third. This time, the Tigers were hungry, and they came out the gate strong.

By the three minute mark of the second period, the Huskies found themselves down 3-0. Goals from Asher Goduco, Jacob Carroll and Luke Hampel, meant the Huskies needed to push hard in the second if they had any shot of winning this contest.

At 6:38, the Huskies finally stopped the bleeding and got on the board courtesy of Lucas Vacca. Picking up this third of the season, the Huskies managed to add another goal less than 30 seconds later. This time, it was Antonio Cerqua that added the tally. Just like that, the Huskies were only own 3-2 heading into the third.

Unfortunately, Hampel added his second of the night to send the Huskies home with a 4-2 loss at the hands of the Aurora Tigers. Vlad Visan was pulled after allowing 3 goals on six shots, backup Logan Kennedy ended up going 12 for 13 in his relief effort.

Grounding the Golden Hawks

The Huskies seemed to have had the Golden Hawks number these past few seasons, creating excitement after excitement each time the teams played each other. This time the battle moved to the Hanger in Trenton, and as always, the teams didn’t disappoint.

Despite no scoring in the first, Huskies Goaltender Logan Kennedy was busy in the crease. Making save after save, the 16-year-old keeper made a key stop going cross crease to rob the Golden Hawks of what was surely a golden goal.

However, the Hawks did break the seal in the second, thanks to a powerplay goal from Charlie Key. The powerplay was a result of Ty Petrou incurring a game misconduct for interference from the bench penalty, in which Petrou was ejected from the game.

Despite a key loss in the Huskies lineup for the rest of the game, the Huskie countered the Hawks one powerplay goal with two of their own. Captain Patty Saini added his tenth goal of the year on the powerplay, while John Mead added his third of the season also on the mad advantage. Despite the struggles the Huskies powerplay unit has seen, they were firing on all cylinders Sunday night.

To close out the game, the Huskies had to fend off a massive charge from the Hawks, but when the dust settled Vacca potted the empty net to send the Huskies with a huge two point win over the Golden Hawks.

Kennedy picked up a massive 27 save win, received first star honours and the game jacket. The Huskies now move to 2-0 on the season series with Trenton but still stay at 10th in the divisional standings six points outside the top five. To

make up for the away schedule last week, the Huskies will have two home games this week. Tuesday will see the Milton Menace come to town, while Friday the Huskies venture to the St Michael’s College Arena to take on the Buzzers, before returning home against the Cougars on Saturday.

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9	6	8	4	7	3	5	1	2
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5	2	9	3	1	4	8	6	7
4	7	3	2	8	6	9	5	1
7	1	4	8	3	2	6	9	5
2	9	5	6	4	1	3	7	8
8	3	6	7	5	9	1	2	4



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Minden Times

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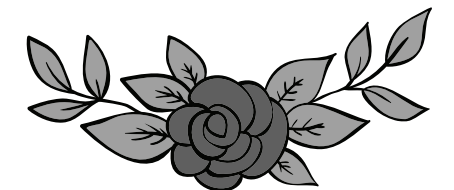


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650 OBITUARIES



Timothy Ernest Laframboise

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Timothy Ernest Laframboise, who left this world after a brief illness on Friday, October 13, 2023, at the age of 67. He was surrounded by his loving family in his final moments.

Tim was the beloved soulmate of Tracey, a devoted father and stepfather to his children, Ryan (Christine), Jenny (Mike), Ashley (Josh), and Brad (Olivia), and the cherished son of Dawn (Dave).

In addition to his children, Tim leaves behind a legacy in the form of his five grandchildren, one great-grandson, and a collection of hideously ugly tropical print t-shirts. He loved classic country music, always knew the Beer Store hours, and volunteered at more Canadian Dachshund Rescue events than he would like you to know.

He was predeceased by his identical twin brother, Terry (Jodi), and his father, "Bud" Romeo.

As a faithful companion, Tim will be profoundly missed by his couch partners, Tiny and Lily.

Tim touched the lives of so many with his quiet strength, patient and gentle spirit, and steadfast commitment to being there for those he loved. He was a man of integrity, a loving partner, father, and grandfather, and a devoted, if seemingly reluctant, dog dad. His memory will be cherished and celebrated by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Honouring Tim's wishes, in lieu of a service the family asks that donations be made to Haliburton Pet Owners Assistance Fund and that friends and family remember Tim as he would have wanted - privately, and with a nice cold beer.



In Loving Memory

John Richard William Max (Jack)

93, of Minden Hills and Linwood, ON, passed away peacefully on October 22, 2023.

He was predeceased by his wife Ruth Stinson Max and his daughter Jill Dianne Max.

Jack leaves behind two daughters Joanne (Jody) Max and Jennifer Gloin (Greg Gloin); 6 grandchildren: Andrew Beattie (Caitlyn Beattie), Chris Taylor, Emma Beattie (Robert Salvage), Matthew Taylor (Marla Taylor) Jake Gloin (Nikki Aitcheson-Huehn), Leah Gloin (Ryan Hergott), and 3 great grandchildren: Logan, James and Charlotte Beattie (Andrew & Caitlyn).

Jack was well loved and will be missed by all who knew him.

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Dr. Harry E. Good

1988 Highlander chosen

Dr. Harry E. Good has been named the 1988 Highlander of the Year. The award was made Wednesday evening at the annual meeting of the Haliburton Highlands Chamber of Commerce, held at Wig-a-Mog Inn.

The introduction of this year's recipient of the annual award was made by Dysart et al Reeve Murray Fearrey. He told the audience Dr. Good had been chosen for the award because of his contribution as a medical practitioner and, "for giving generously of himself, his talents and for sharing his gains with the community."

Among the numerous achievements cited in presenting the award, was Dr. Good's ongoing concern for the physical and emotional well-being of the citizens of the community. "He has been a constant supporter of the Haliburton Hospital and provided financial and moral support for the new addition," Fearrey said. "For 30 years he has been available night and day for medical, emotional or any other help he can give."

(more on page 7)



1988 Highlander of the Year, Dr. Harry E. Good, is presented with a plaque by Dysart et al Reeve Fearrey at the annual gathering of the Haliburton Highland Chamber of Commerce, Wednesday.

Glass shares water concerns

Candidates face off

Free trade may be the dominant issue on a national level in this federal election campaign, but when the local candidates visit Haliburton County there is no escaping the fact that people want answers to the water levels problem.

Three of the candidates who hope to replace Bill Scott as the Victoria - Haliburton Member of Parliament fielded a variety of questions from area media representatives during a debate at the Dysart Community Centre last Wednesday evening. But it was plain to see by the reaction of the audience that the main reason they had come out that night was to hear what the candidates are going to do to solve the problem of fluctuating water levels in Haliburton's lakes.

The small audience paid passive attention as candidates Bruce Glass (Liberal), Cathy Vainio (NDP) and Archie Dobbins (Commonwealth of Canada) addressed the issues of taxes, free trade and abortion. But when the question of dealing with water levels was put to the candidates, there was a quick shuffling of chairs as people sat forward to listen.

Glass, who is representing the Liberals in his second election run, proved to be well versed on this issue. Vainio admitted a lack of understanding and Dobbins blamed it on the new computers used in the Trent-Severn Waterway.

"I'd be prepared to go to bat for you"

If elected, Glass promises to provide the necessary representation in Ottawa that has been lacking in recent years. "As your representative, I'd be prepared to go to bat for you," he said. The problem has existed for decades; "we can't keep putting it off with studies."

There have been at least three studies carried out on the problems with water levels in area lakes since the early 1960's, but the political will to finally solve the troubles has been missing. The extremely hot and dry summers of the past two years caused lake levels to plummet to new lows, while public concern has skyrocketed.

The problem, as outlined by Glass is two-fold. There is a shortage of reservoir capacity to offset flooding and drought in the top end of the Trent-Severn Waterway and there is a pollution problem which demands continuous flushing at Peterborough.

Increasing the reservoir capacity in Haliburton will be a costly venture, but Glass says the government will "have to bite the bullet and spend the money."

The problem in the lower part of the waterway is more complex. Unless strong flows are maintained, Rice Lake "will become a cess pool" from the discharges from Peterborough's sewage treatment plants. The solution here will take the co-operation of the province and the City of Peterborough to upgrade its sewage plant. He noted that the federal Liberals have promised \$5-billion will be set aside for this sort

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Ride stays intact

The possibility of splitting next summer's Ontario Ride For Sight into two groups has been ruled out and Minden is once again being given the option of hosting the massive motorcycle extravaganza.

Rick Start, who is the national co-ordinator for the Ride, told Anson, Hindon and Minden council that he believes the Ontario chapter of this fund-raising event has "topped out" in terms of the number of people who will be participating. There were 4,400 motorcycles involved in the Ride last summer and Start is not predicting a great deal of growth for the coming

"It takes towns like this to make this thing a success..."

year.

Start, along with the provincial chairman Sid Sollier and Gerry German, attended a recent council meeting to provide an update on the group's activities and plans for the coming year. The next Ride will mark the 10th anniversary of this event, which is designed to raise money for research into a cure for Retinitis Pigmentosa.

With the municipal election just around the

corner, council was not able to provide confirmation that the municipality would accept the Ride back for another year. Council members felt this decision should be made by those who are elected on November 14.

The tentative date for next year's Ride is the weekend of June 10 and 11. Although the number of participants is expected to stay about the same, organizers will be boosting the amount of promotion

for the event and have set a fundraising target of \$1-million for Ontario alone. Last year, the Ontario Ride raised about \$700,000.

Another reason the Ride is not being split is the fact that this is the 10th anniversary and they want to make sure it is a success. Start told council that participants enjoy coming to Minden because they know the fun they are going to have and the warm welcome from the community.

"It takes towns like this to make this thing a success right across the country," Start said. He also noted

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